

Exhibit No.

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SB 231

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SB231: Opting out of traumatic brain injury fund

Introduced by: B Hamlette

Committee: Finance and Claims Hearing 2/10/2011 5:00pm Room 317

Though I recognize the value of the traumatic brain injury funding, I oppose the idea of making this an "opt-out" item on vehicle registrations. I also realize that most people when asked if they want to contribute, will say no, but at least they are allowed to make an informed and conscious choice in how they spend their money.

As with the State parks fund, making people opt-out is really a Sneaky Pete way to collect money from unsuspecting vehicle owners.

My husband and I are too busy working to pay our taxes and other bills to visit the State parks. In my 15 years in Montana, I've visited one State park...one time. So I try to remember to opt out of the fee. Last June I forgot to opt out until the clerk handed me my new registration. At that point, I said that I wanted to opt out.

She gave me a deer in the headlight look and said the registration had already been processed. I suggested she just give me back \$4.00 so I wouldn't have to write another check. She said she couldn't do that. I then suggested she back out the transaction and we would start over with another check and such. She said it would take over an hour to do that. I wondered at the time since it only took a few minutes to put it in. Given the reported problems and lines at the vehicle registration counters across the State, I was hesitant to pursue the matter. As she probably expected (and hoped) I didn't want to wait that long. I protested, grumbled and muttered under my breath some not too flattering comments about government and lack of customer service and walked away, thinking that was the last time I would be hood winked.

This June, if I forget, I will stand there and hold up that line until the process is complete. But, by scrawling **I OPT OUT OF ALL OPTIONAL FEES** on the current registration form, I'm hoping to avoid the situation.

That aside, a more appropriate place for the collection of money for this fund is on the State income tax form, right along with Nongame Wildlife Program, Child Abuse Prevention, Agriculture in Schools, and Montana Military Family Relief Fund.

Because, what is the next group that will want to do their fundraising by piggy backing on the vehicle registration system? Where will it end?

I realize that there are people who could benefit from such a program, but how many Montana residents would be served by this funding?

Why can't this be funded with fundraising efforts, and private and corporate donations and programs?

As to the fiscal note, I take exception to #9 and #10 that says it would take 40 hours @ \$165/hr (or \$6600) to make the change. I haven't seen the data

entry screen or the code behind it, but in my 20+ years experience as a software developer, that doesn't make sense.

A checkbox is an on/off type of control on a form. Since this option is already available as an "opt-in", the checkbox, or similar control, should already exist, along with a default status of "unchecked" and the code that says if the box is checked, add \$1. At the most, a programmer should have to change the default status to 'checked' and the prompt on the screen to "Opt out" or something. Even being generous, it should take only a couple of hours to make the change, test it, document it, and put the change into the various libraries normally kept by software development teams.

While I would like to fund all sorts of worthy programs, I see it as another government program that will continue to require more and more funding at a time when money is tight and we should be cutting back.

I'm sorry that I will have to stand in opposition to this bill and urge the committee members to vote no.

Thank you,

Cindy Swank

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